



McMaster University Retirees Association

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**Minutes for COUNCIL MEETING of McMaster University Retirees Association
Wednesday, May 12, 2021, 1 PM (Zoom)**

1. Welcome & Regrets

Present: Denise Anderson, Cliff Andrews, Helen Ayre, Helen Barton (chair), Brian Beckberger, Barb Carpio, Nora Gaskin, Heather Grigg, John Horsman, Hank Jacek, Mahendra Joshi, Michelle Jubinville, Betty Ann Levy, Kathy Overholt

Regrets: Mary Gauld, Nancy Gray, Mary Law, Debbie Weisensee

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

2.1 Council Meeting April 14, 2021 (for approval)

Moved by Brian Beckberger, **seconded** by Heather Grigg

“that the minutes of April 14, 2021 be approved”

Carried.

3. Business Arising

4. Human Resources Report (Michelle Jubinville)

- **Administrative changes to benefits item for *MURAnews*:** Michelle thanked Helen for the email she sent regarding the item for *MURAnews*, and she will be ready to help with it for the Summer issue.
- **Next of kin email addresses to be included in HR death notices whenever available:** Michelle has requested this.
- **Several members' @mcmaster.ca email addresses bouncing back:** Michelle has been able to find no reason for this other than a person being deceased, and those addresses that bounced back should not have done so as far as HR is concerned. She suggests that we should continue to send email to those addresses, and if it happens again to let her know, and follow up with UTS including a copy of whatever error messages are received.
- **Eye surgery coverage question:** still outstanding.
- **T4A** resolved by contacting CIBC Mellon directly at their toll free number.

- **HR web pages regarding tuition assistance:** We have looked at the pages and would like to provide feedback about their usability. We also have a question about whether it is the case that while a retiree up to age 65 can take a course at no cost with the tuition assistance benefit, after age 65 “the required full-time application fee [\$150 in most cases] must be paid and must accompany the appropriate application to the Ontario Universities’ Application Centre”. **Action:** We will send written feedback about the web pages to Michelle, who will pass it along to the appropriate people, and see if they are willing to meet with us on Zoom. She will investigate and let us know about the application fee.
- Michelle asked if this format for liaising with HR is working and if she is the right person to be the HR liaison. Council members agreed that the format is working and as long as Michelle is willing to stay in the role of liaison we are happy and grateful to have her continue as our liaison.
- Brian asked about the CIBC Mellon PenProPlus portal, which was covered at the pre-retirement seminar he attended on MURA’s behalf. Michelle said it is only for active employees at this time, but eventually it will probably be rolled out to everybody, including retirees. **Action:** Michelle will follow up with Brian with more information.

5. President’s Report (Helen Barton)

Pension Trust Committee Representative 2021 - 2022

- We have received the annual request to recommend a MURA representative for appointment to the PTC. Brian Beckberger, our current representative, has served in this capacity since 2016. He is willing to serve for another year “at the pleasure of Council”. Brian withdrew from the meeting and rejoined after the vote.

Moved by Heather Grigg, **seconded** by Helen Ayre

“that Brian Beckberger be appointed as MURA’s representative to the Pension Trust Committee for 2021-22”

Carried.

Salaried Pension Plan Administrative Expenses

- Reported last month: The university administration gave notice that they want to replace the existing 1998 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on pension plan administrative expenses with a policy. The issues are who has the authority to make this change, the loss of oversight of the plan by the member organizations that would result, and the content of the new policy.
- Administration also gave notice of proposed substantial increases to the administrative expenses to be charged to the salaried pension plans, including a large retroactive amount for the purchase and ongoing fees for the pension administration computer system PenProPlus.
- MURA Executive and Brian Beckberger (our rep on PTC) met with Wanda McKenna for information gathering on April 20, and with representatives of MUFA, Unifor 5555, and the Clinical Faculty Association on May 6.

- The motions were to be voted on by PTC on May 13, but as a result of various discussions the process has been delayed.
- A second meeting of MURA reps with MUFA and the other groups will be held. A joint meeting between administration and all groups involved is being planned.

Definition of a Retiree and Retiree Supplemental Benefits

- Wanda McKenna has informed us that the draft policy will be presented to PVP (the President and Vice-Presidents committee) at their May 25 meeting.
- **Action:** We need to formally communicate our concerns about the policy's impact on the University in time for the members of PVP to consider before that meeting
 - Those retiring under age 65 with RRSP, regardless of years of service, will not be considered Mac retirees and will not receive even supplementary retiree benefits (e.g. parking, library privileges, tuition assistance)
 - Many current retiree supplementary benefits are not stated in the new policy (e.g. photo ID card, a MAC ID, meal plans)

Communication with Human Resources

- MURA has been asked to review the current way HR supports Council's queries and needs. Is the current meeting format still applicable and does it meet everyone's needs? HR wants to make sure they are making the best use of everyone's time and the appropriate person is addressing the requests in a timely manner. They are open to any suggested changes, either in how interactions are done, or in the frequency.

Retiree Tuition Assistance/Tuition Waiver for 65+

- A review of the new HR website information on tuition assistance and waivers is underway, but not completed. Nora, Denise and Helen are working on this and welcome others to take part. We are hoping to feature these HR pages in the summer *MURAnews*, in time for registrations for fall courses.

CURAC

- The CURAC AGM is scheduled for June 23, 2:00 pm, with a Best Practices session immediately following.
- This is the same timing as the MURA AGM. Unless a Council member would like to represent MURA as a voting delegate at the CURAC AGM, suggestion is to ask Mary Johnston to do so. She has indicated her willingness.
- Council decision is required. Normally the MURA president is named the voting delegate, with another member of the Executive or Council named as backup.

Moved by Brian Beckberger, **seconded** by John Horsman

“that Mary Johnston represent MURA at the CURAC AGM, June 23, 2021”

Carried

Alvin Lee's Memoir – *There Was a Farm in Eden*

The e-book version of Alvin's book will be promoted in the Summer *MURAnews*. Unless new information arises, we will abandon the idea of self-publishing on Amazon – it cannot be offered at no cost, and there are income tax implications that make it too complex for MURA to handle. We will offer a free .mobi file with instructions for loading to e-readers and apps, and will also offer a PDF to provide a simple format for others.

UTS Retiree Services

- A definition of the level of phone and walk-in support for McMaster email to be provided to retirees by the Help Desk is still not finalized. Heather, Nora and Helen last met with Sue McKinlay of UTS on March 18.

Pre-retirement workshops

- Brian represented MURA at the May 4 workshop. Thanks, Brian.
- We did not have a representative at the May 6 workshop.

Carry-Over Items

MURA Council Portfolio Roles

- The role of *MURAnews* Chair has been vacant since Phyllis DeRosa Koetting finished her Council term. This still needs to be filled.

Survey and Strategic Planning

- A final report on the survey results and planning for a strategic planning exercise are still outstanding.

6. Treasurer's Report (Nancy Gray) – written report

Last year's financial statements are now at the auditor, and as soon as that is complete, this year's financial statements will go, so that we will have audited statements in time for the AGM.

7. Reports on Special Projects

7.1 Academic Awards Endowment (Helen Barton)

An email has gone out from University Advancement to some of the people who have contributed in the past but not so far to the new graduate scholarship. MURA will send the email to others in this category for whom UA does not have an email address. We have about \$15,000 to go to achieve our goal.

7.2 Archives (Mary Johnston) – no report

7.3 Fundraising – MURA Cards (no report)

8. Information Reports from Committees

8.1 AGM (Helen Barton for Mary Gauld) – Five minutes after the newsletter went out last night, we had our first registration, and are now up to 5 or 6 registrations. Mahendra will continue to monitor the phone. Hank, Helen, Nora and Mary will get together to plan the meeting order of events. Mary is taking care of door prizes.

8.2 Christmas Lunch (Mary Gauld) – no report

8.3 Communications (John Horsman) – no report

8.3.1 Condolence cards (Barb Carpio) – written report

We have a large number of people who are on our list of passings, but for whom we have no next of kin information.

8.3.2 Web site (Nora Gaskin) – no report

8.4 Constitution and By-Laws (Brian Beckberger)

Brian is working on amendments to the Constitution for next year's AGM about our definition of a retiree, which will include the people who will be excluded in the university's new definition.

8.5 Membership (Kathy Overholt) – written report

8.6 MURAnews – We will wait until the AGM is over before we publish the Summer issue, so the issue will be a bit later than usual.

8.7 Nominating (Heather Grigg) – no report

8.8 Pensions and Benefits (Brian Beckberger & Mary Law) – For future reference, members who don't receive their T4A can call CIBC Mellon Retiree Assistance phone number at 1-800-565-0479. **Action:** Nora will add the number to the Pension information page on the MURA web site.

8.9 Trips & Special Events (Mary Gauld) – no report

8.10 Volunteering (Betty Ann Levy) – no report

9. Information Reports from Liaisons

9.1 University Board of Governors (Betty Ann Levy) – written report

For fall term preparations are being made for all scenarios. Spring and summer sessions are all online, but there are hopes for an in-person session in the fall if conditions permit.

9.2 Community Engagement Committee (Betty Ann Levy) – no report

9.3 CURAC (Helen Barton) – see President’s Report

9.4 CURAC Later Life Learning Committee (Barb Carpio)

We are still getting random events coming in from various universities. We are still planning to get together as a group (Barb, John, Helen and Nora) to put together some guidelines about what we will pass along to our membership. In the meantime Barb, John, Helen and Nora will deal with things on a case-by-case basis using criteria such as relevance for McMaster retirees, presence of absence of contact information and useful detail about the event, etc. Barb would also like to develop guidelines about what she will submit to the committee regarding McMaster events.

9.5 MUFA (Hank Jacek) – Hank asked Mara Giannotti, Executive Director of MUFA whether she had received any complaints from MUFA members about administrative changes in benefits and she said she had not.

9.6 Unifor 5555 (Mahendra Joshi) – no report

9.7 Hourly Staff Liaison (Cliff Andrews) – Hourly staff are getting ready for the students to come back to campus.

9.8 Hourly Pension Committee (Cliff Andrews) – There was a meeting yesterday, but it will be the 4th quarter before we know if there will be an increase next year.

9.9 Salaried Pension Committee (Brian Beckberger) – Brian has 1,102 pages of material to read in advance of the next meeting.

9.10 Age-Friendly University Committee (Mary Gauld) – no report

10. Other Business

Hank: Death notices in the Spectator in the month of April that mentioned McMaster University: 4; mention of a funeral: 1.

Moved by Brian Beckberger at 2:22 pm

“that the meeting be adjourned”

Carried.